

Leonard Lee Nichols, Jr.

May 15, 1939 – September 13, 1959

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Excessive speed was blamed by State and City Police for the fatal accident that killed a 20-year-old Pipestem man and injured two teen-agers, also from Pipestem at 12:15 Sunday morning on route 20 just outside of the Hinton city limits.

In the spectacular accident that saw the 1953 Ford Sedan in which the three were riding plunge over the high cliff to the main line of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway, Leonard Lee (Johnny) Nichols, was killed, Clacy Leroy Goff, 18, owner of the car was hospitalized with a broken thigh and contusions about the chest, while his brother, Jackle, 18, received a broken arm and contusions about the face. Both were treated for shock.

Dr. J. W. Stokes said that Nichols died almost instantly from a broken neck and chest injuries.

The car was completely demolished and was moved from the west bound tracks by a railway crane to the crossing at Barksdale where it was picked up by a wrecker from the Garten Motor Company. No traffic was delayed on the railroad by the car being on the track as train No. 1 was late Sunday morning.

The point at which the car plunged over the high cliff, a straight drop estimated at close to 100 feet, was about 300 feet east of the CW cabin.

R. O. Wiseman, a telegrapher who was on duty at the time of the crash, heard the noise as the automobile hit the tracks. He quickly summoned an ambulance and notified the dispatcher at Hinton and then hurried to the scene.

When he arrived at the demolished car, the three young men were outside lying on the track in the darkness and groaning. Two of them numbed incoherently, Wiseman said.

Officers who investigated the tragic accident said that the speeding automobile was headed west on route 20 and that as it rounded a curve at Dunkort's it went off on the inside berm at that point, then swerved back on to the highway, and went a distance of approximately 225 feet before hitting an embankment on the lower side of the road that apparently caused it to take off into the air.

Before going over the cliff, the top of the car hit a nearby telephone pole, and the mark on the pole indicated that the car was 10 feet in the air at the time.

Both the Goff boys, in a statement to City Police, said that Nichols had started driving the car when they reached the West End filling station shortly before

The dead youth is a son of Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Nichols and was born at Pipestem on May 15, 1939. He was a graduate of the Hinton High school and was a popular member of the senior class of 1958.

Besides his parents, other survivors include: two sisters; Mrs. Margaret Farley of Morgantown, and Wilma Joyce, at home; three brothers, Fred, Thomas and William Ray, at home.

Funeral services will be held Tuesday at 2 p.m. at Jordan's Chapel near Pipestem with the Rev. Herold Pittsenbarger officiating. Burial will follow in the El-lison cemetery.

The body was moved from the Memorial Funeral Directory in Princeton to the home this afternoon.